793 536 were also made use of, at first in connection with religious stories; subsequently we find stories taken from history, especially after the beginning of historical studies early in the 18th century. From the rulers of antiquity by way of the ancient German and Lombard kings up to the reigning House of Hapsburg, all with high rank or well-known names which might serve either as an example or a warning to youth were brought into these plays. It is noteworthy that a number of subjects reappeared in the literature of subsequent decades, especially in the period of classicism. In the Jesuit Theatre we find, to mention only a few examples, a forerunner of Schiller's "The Robbers", as well as of the "Iphigenie" of Goethe and Körners' "Zriny". Thus the Jesuit Theatre was of value in preparing the way for the literature of later times, as well as because it was in itself the most comprehensive theatre organisation known to history. Far and wide it cleared the ground for the professional stage by making the cultured classes acquainted with the theatre from their earliest youth. In many towns of the Jesuit "Province" of Austria—for example in Hungary—it was [517] the immediate forerunner of the professional theatre. The value of this Jesuit Theatre lay not so much in the grandiose stage presentation at some particular place such as Vienna or Graz, nor in the literary value of the works of such a man as Avancinus, but rather in its achievements for the general development of culture. Its mission once fulfilled, it faded away.

793 871 815 With Rousseau's "Age of Enlightenment" there began a conflict about the Jesuit schools which for two centuries had supplied the Emperor with his leading statesmen and to which the Counter-Reformation in Austria owed its success. The main argument against them was that they were in themselves reactionary and their methods old-fashioned. Yet it was just the Jesuit schools which in the first half of the 18th century proved themselves to be thoroughly progressive, for it was they who introduced the teaching of history and encouraged study of the natural sciences. In Vienna they founded a "*Museum Mathematicum*", the first institute of its kind in Austria and a precursor of the modern museums, and pursued definite educational aims through its collection of physical and astronomical instruments. The Jesuits were also the first in this part of the world to make serious experiments in physics and chemistry and to demonstrate them in public. The Emperor Franz, Consort of Maria Theresia, even called the Brothers to Schönbrunn Palace to make such demonstrations.

Until the latter half of the 18th century the students in the Jesuit schools of the Austrian Province numbered more than 16,000 and although thereafter their numbers began to decrease slowly, the abolition of the Order put an end to an educational system which was still flourishing.

793 873 545 The final performance at the theatre in the Bäckerstrasse was given in the year 1760 by the sixth class, that of rhetoric, which acted "Menaeus"—actually the last play produced by the Jesuit Theatre in Vienna. The beauty of the play, the acting of

the boys and the fine scenery was much admired, and no one guessed that they were acting for the last time. Soon afterwards an Imperial decree was issued totally forbidding this type of training in the schools, and in the year 1761 "nobody set foot again in the theatre". The stage fell into decay; not until 1766 was the tangle of rafters and the disorder in the hall removed to prepare the auditorium for lectures, but the old glory had departed; seven years later the entire activities of the *Societas Jesu* were forbidden (1773).

The "Age of Enlightenment" had finally reached Vienna. A clear-cut difference of intellectual attitude divided the city, and slowly the Jesuit Theatre had to yield place to the professional theatre with its literary basis.

The Order of Jesuits left the country in obedience to the Emperor's command, its mission fulfilled. Embattled Catholicism in conjunction with Imperial Power had weathered the storm of Turkish invasion. The age of Baroque blossomed forth in glory.

Since the days of the Jesuit schools the word "theatre" has formed an inseparable part of the thoughts and imagination of the Austrian people—the theatre as a stage for free discussion, as a means for acquiring knowledge, as a method for the exchange of ideas among men. For seven generations youth had been taught to link up and to compare the theatre with the surrounding world, seeing the one in the other and through the one understanding the other.

Placed amid that outside world which often put might before right, the theatre became increasingly a home for daring ideas, and the stage developed into an open platform for free speech. Thus in Austria, not only for the professionals, the authors and actors, but also for the public, the idea of the theatre has become one of the most cherished features of life, that great world-theatre where life is a dream, a play by and for every man.